



**THE SENATE
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Dear Neighbor,

If you're like me, you've seen the crisis that has engulfed our border and how that crisis has impacted American cities all across our great country.

In early March, I had the opportunity to visit the frontlines of this emergency and see firsthand the dangers that our nation is facing.

I saw the parts of the border that were secured, with walls extending 40 feet high up into the air. I also saw the unsecured parts of our border, with unprotected roads leading straight into our country.

I heard directly from the victims themselves as they described the horrors of the young women being brutalized by cartels, young men forced into drug trafficking, and vulnerable people continually taken advantage of in such a lawless region.

The fact is that the current border policy is endangering our national security, disrupting livelihoods, straining resources, and allowing dangerous drugs to flood into our local communities. Law enforcement officers and innocent bystanders are now even being brutally beaten and murdered by catch-and-release criminals, illegally squatting in the U.S., who should have been deported a long time ago.

Sadly, through our own so-called welcome policies for immigrants who are here illegally — including proposed driver's licenses and state IDs, and taxpayer-funded housing subsidies for migrants — Michigan is on a path to putting the needs of immigrants who are here illegally ahead of its actual citizens, our safety, and our tax resources.

We must do better. While I can't force Congress and the president to act federally, we can do our part in Michigan to protect our communities from this crisis.

That's why I am fighting for the Stronger Borders, Safer Communities plan introduced by Senate Republicans. Senate Bills 724 and 725 would ban local governments and counties from becoming "sanctuaries," meaning that local governments would no longer be able to prevent cooperating with federal immigration authorities. Currently, three Michigan counties — Ingham, Kalamazoo, and Wayne, plus the city of Lansing, are considered sanctuary havens.

Too many of these so-called “sanctuary” cities have seen their communities overwhelmed by immigrants who are here illegally, crime, and reckless dangers, such as the horrible tragedy that befell Laken Riley. Mayors of major U.S. cities like Denver, Chicago, and New York are begging for hundreds of millions of extra dollars to house, school, and care for unmanageable instant population booms of hundreds and thousands of immigrants who are here legally or illegally. We can’t afford to have that happen here in Michigan.

With record fentanyl and illegal drugs pouring across the border, our families are at risk. Senate Bills 726 and 727 would crack down on rising fentanyl levels in our state by increasing the penalties on fentanyl trafficking.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, illicit fentanyl is primarily smuggled into the United States through Mexico, and seven out of every 10 pills seized contain a lethal dose of the drug. In 2023, more than 27,000 pounds of fentanyl were seized at the border — an 860% increase compared to 2019. This level of neglect is putting all of our children at risk.

Just three weeks after six kilograms of fentanyl were seized near Paw Paw in 2023, the DEA captured 20 kilograms in Oakland County. That’s Michigan’s largest fentanyl bust to date and enough to kill around 10 million people — that’s nearly everyone in the state.

The Centers for Disease Control Prevention reports that synthetic opioids like fentanyl are the primary driver of overdose deaths. Upwards of 3,000 Michiganders die from drug overdose each year and it’s the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45.

Yet when this legislative package was recently brought up for consideration, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle chose *not* to protect Michiganders against the dangers of fentanyl and failed sanctuary policies.

Whatever happens with these bills, I promise that I will continue to fight for the most vulnerable — at the border and in our communities. We have an obligation to you to help keep our families and our communities secure, regardless of the politics.

We must have strong borders, tougher rules, and a willingness to put the American people first. You can count on me to fight for that every day as your voice in the state Senate.

In your service,



Senator Jim Runestad

“Serving the 23rd State Senate District”